

Serving the Militant's Cause: The Role of Indo-Pak State Policies in Sustaining Militancy in Kashmir

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Syed Eesar Mehdi¹

C. Christine Fair. 2019. *In Their Own Words: Understanding Lashkar-e-Tayyaba*. Oxford University Press. 307 pp. ISBN: 978-0-19-949521-4.

David Devadas. 2018. *The Generation of Rage in Kashmir*. Oxford University Press. 223 pp. ISBN: 978-0-19-947799-9.

Rao Farman Ali. 2017. *History of Armed Struggle in Kashmir*. Jay Kay Books. 304 pp. ISBN: 978-93-83908-64-6.

Abstract

The essay explores three recently published books on the origins of militancy in Kashmir. In short, they all find that two causal factors are responsible for the insurgency's ability to endure. First, the unending muscular security policy of India coupled with its explicit integrationist approach that triggered alienation by squeezing the democratic space of Kashmiris. Second, the role played by Pakistan in strongly backing the menagerie of militant groups for weakening political and territorial control of India over Kashmir. These books rely on a series of case studies of the different militant groups that have operated in Kashmir: most notably, Al-Fatah, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) and Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT). The emergence of Al-Fatah and JKLF was an offshoot of New Delhi's iron-fist approach compounded with the dwindling of democratic space. Pakistan played a major role in the creation of HM and LeT by invoking Islam and Muslim identity as mobilising factors. These books, in their own different ways, identify a teleological shift in the thinking, strategies and operations of the militant groups, and this essay tries to extrapolate this by outlining the key markers of distinction between the old and new militancy.

¹ Department of International Relations, South Asian University, New Delhi, Delhi, India.

Corresponding author:

Syed Eesar Mehdi, Department of International Relations, South Asian University, New Delhi, Delhi 110021, India.

E-mail: Eesar.mehdi@gmail.com

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Introduction

In the first week of August 2019, the Government of India under the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) abrogated Article 370 and 35A reducing the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir to husk and bifurcating the state into two new Union Territories: Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. The stripping of Kashmir's special status has done away with a law that allowed Kashmir to limit land ownership and permanent residency to natives (Venkatesan, 2020). A strong majority of the people in the valley believe that this move could drastically alter the demographic composition of Jammu and Kashmir (Dutta, 2019). The fear of demographic change looms large in the minds of the population which could trigger a fresh wave of militancy in Kashmir (Bhat, 2019). The iron-fisted approach combined with the declining of democratic space has been used by New Delhi for (mis)handling Kashmir since the 1950s, alienating large portions of the Kashmiri population and pushing them on the brink of militancy. Pakistan, on the other hand, has exploited India's mishandling of Kashmir to recruit and use proxies to pursue its own vital security and political interests.

There have been numerous studies exploring the origins of the Kashmiri insurgency, its participants and organisation that have led to the recent upsurge in unrest within the troubled state. Yet, the three recent books under review all provide a refreshing and even-handed assessment of the militancy; each in their own way exploring the complex links between Pakistan's deep state, India's heavy-handed security presence and Kashmiri politics of self-determination. David Devadas' (2018) *The Generation of Rage in Kashmir* investigates the motivations of the recent generation of Kashmiri youth who have increasingly supported the militancy. Aside from providing a clear narrative of Kashmir's troubled history, Devadas's book provides a nuanced explanation of how and why the militancy has been revitalised, challenging the typical black-and-white narratives on Kashmir.

In contrast to Devadas's sweeping analysis of the underlying issues, Christina Fair's book, *In Their Own Words*, provides a deep and detailed study of one of the more prominent and dangerous militant groups in Kashmir, Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT). In drawing from over 900 primary sources from the LeT, Fair challenges the conventional thinking on factors behind Pakistan's use of and support for the terrorist group. Finally, Rao Farman Ali's *History of Armed Struggle in Kashmir* challenges the conventional narrative that the Kashmiri insurgency only began in 1989. Detailing the political events throughout the 1940s and the 1950s, Ali illustrates that militant groups emerged significantly earlier than generally believed and most notably provides a detailed commentary on the first indigenous militant outfit Al-Fatah. The insights present in all three books are significant in

understanding the markers of distinction between the 'old' and 'new' manifestations of the Kashmiri militancy.

The essay is divided into four sections. The first section critically looks at the various existing theoretical explanations on the origins and composition of militancy in Kashmir. The second section outlines the historical roots of the militancy in Kashmir, how it has often been misconstrued and, as Ali shows, how its origins actually stem from several pro-Pakistan opposition movements active in the 1950s and 1960s. The third section explores the discourse around recent developments in Kashmir and the emergence of a 'new' militant movement following the oppressive counter-insurgency operations by India and the support by Pakistani terrorist groups. Finally, the essay explores the various literature on the different groups that have fought in the Kashmir militancy, with a special focus on the LeT.

Conceptualising the Rise of Militancy in Kashmir

There is a huge corpus of literature that explains the rise of militancy in Kashmir originated because of three main theoretical elucidations. The first theoretical argument provided by the literature explicates that militancy in Kashmir sprang due to the competing visions of nationalism: religious nationalism represented by Pakistan, secular nationalism epitomised by India and ethnic nationalism embodied in Kashmiriyat (see Bose, 2003; Chowdhary, 2012; Jacob, 2017; Varshney, 1991). This array of literature offers insights that the clash between the three nationalisms ultimately narrows down to the tussle between the two different understandings on nationalism: one is Hindu nationalism represented by India and the other is Muslim nationalism embodied by Pakistan. The clash between these two nationalisms as per this literature is at the heart of the militancy in Kashmir.

The second set of literature charts out Indian position on the issue arguing that Pakistan is responsible for the militancy in Kashmir because it provides logistic support and training to the militants (see Evans, 2000; Puri, 1993; Ray, 1997; Subrahmanyam, 1990). This puts the onus of creating militancy solely on Pakistan arguing that it continuously uses militant groups to achieve its goal of merging Kashmir within its territorial borders. The incorporation of Kashmir into Pakistan has become a fundamental premise of the 'Two Nation Theory' that forms the ideological foundation upon which Pakistan as a state principally rests. Pakistan envisages Kashmir as a vital part of its territoriality and continues to perceive itself as an incomplete Muslim state denied of strategic depth without the accession of Kashmir to its territorial boundaries. Pakistan's imagining of a Muslim mother state would remain incomplete unless the state of Jammu and Kashmir accedes to it and for achieving that goal Pakistan state allies with the menagerie of non-state actors.

The third argument outlined by the literature deliberates the rise of ethno-religious sentiments among oppressed Muslim class, widespread electoral malfeasances and the arbitrary dismissal of the popular leaders being the core reasons responsible for the rise of militancy in Kashmir (see Behera, 2000, p. 164; Evans, 2000; Mohanty, 2018). This body of literature focuses upon the internal

dimension of the Kashmir conflict, often focusing on India's erosion of the democratic institutions in the Valley, circumventing the popular sentiment by unceremoniously dismissing popular leaders and constantly rigged elections to install puppet regimes, giving rise to the militancy in Kashmir. Some have argued that there are two interlinked forces—political mobilisation and institutional decay—that best explain the outbreak of militancy and its particular timing in 1989 (Ganguly, 1996, pp. 76–107). While intriguing, this argument fails to explain the rise of militancy that happened before 1989 and reduces the conflict of Jammu and Kashmir to the dynamic between India and Pakistan, relegating the aspirations of the people of Kashmir to the backburner.

These three sets of theoretical explanations are not without merit, but the explanations they provide regarding the upsurge of militancy in Kashmir are partial and require more exposition. The recent books by Ali, Devadas and Fair in their own way each provide the extra elaboration necessary to fully come to grips with the Kashmir militancy. Specifically, each of the three demonstrates that the militancy in Kashmir has roots in both India's iron-fisted security policies that shrunk democratic space of the people of Kashmir and Pakistan's key role of supporting various militant outfits in Kashmir. Both factors together played a crucial role in the making of militancy in Kashmir.

The Genesis of Militancy in Kashmir

The roots of popular dissatisfaction in Kashmir began with the finality of accession with India, with the large Muslim population of the state of Jammu and Kashmir deliberating 'accession with India as invalid on the terms that Maharaja was unauthorized for executing it, as he was not an elected public representative' (Ali, 2017, p. 57). Rao Farman Ali's *History of Armed Struggle in Kashmir* gives a glimpse of the historical roots of the dissatisfaction on the accession with India, linking it with the rise of militant outfits in Kashmir. Ali's book provides comprehensive historical insights about the rise of the first wave of militancy in Kashmir and challenges the whole body of the literature that conceptualises the emergence of militancy in Kashmir that happened in the 1990s. Ali writes that some annoyed young men launched Mujahid Home Front on 16 October 1948, who were led by Dr Abdul Majeed Shaikh with the backing of the supporters of the Muslim Conference (Ali, 2017, p. 57). This group considered accession with India deceitful, criticised the All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) openly for the resolution in support of accession, propounded the struggle against feudalism and openly supported the accession with Pakistan (Ali, 2017, p. 58; Swami, 2013, p. 78). This group was involved in various violent attacks, most notoriously the arson attack on the government rest house in Anantnag on 20 August 1951 (Ali, 2017, p. 59). The motive behind these violent attacks was to congregate the anti-Indian sentiment to a common point, especially among the youth of Kashmir.

After the Mujahid Home Front was suppressed by the NC government, a small insurgent group called Master Cell emerged on the scene in 1960 with the sole purpose of giving tough resistance to India and supporting the right to self-

determination. However, Ali argues that this group too could not sustain its membership long and disappeared soon after its formation (2017, p. 61). Thus, the task of rebuilding and improvising the Kashmiri insurgency subsequently fell to the National Liberation Front (NLF) which was formed on 13 August 1965 (Ali, 2017, pp. 61–63). This group aimed to use all forms of struggle to enable the people of the Jammu and Kashmir state to determine the future of the state as sole owners of their motherland. Few years after its formation, the leading NLF'S figure Maqbool Bhat was arrested and sentenced to death. This incident broke the back of this militant outfit resulting in its demise.

Yet another militant outfit emerged in 1968 with the name Al-Fatah. Ali's book contributes to the existing commentary of this group by identifying that Al-Fatah was a completely indigenous movement, comprised entirely of Kashmiris, from its commander Ghulam Rasool Zehgeer through to its humble cadres (Ali, 2017, pp. 83–86). The main goal of this group was to highlight the Kashmir issue internationally by giving an armed struggle an indigenous character without the involvement of Pakistan. This group's focus was primarily on Kashmir's right to self-determination and outlined a blueprint for the four-staged processes of the guerrilla warfare to happen in Kashmir (Ali, 2017, pp. 86–88; Swami, 2013, pp. 76–78). However, Al-Fatah had to raise its finances primarily through robbery because Pakistan insisted on Kashmir's accession to Pakistan as the conditions of its support, which was rejected by the group's top leaders (Ali, 2017, p. 98). The group was ultimately dissolved in 1971 with the beginning of the Pakistan–Bangladesh war.

Meanwhile, the longest-lived Kashmiri militant group, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), was founded in the late 1960s in Kashmir by four men: Hamid Sheikh, Ashfaq Majeed Wani, Yasin Malik and Javed Mir (Staniland, 2012, pp. 142–177). Although the JKLF initially achieved little, they managed to create the Islamic Students League in the mid-1980s and then became the face of the new leadership of JKLF in Kashmir. This new leadership linked up small factions of militant groups under the broad JKLF banner and established links with the older section of JKLF residing in Pakistan. This led to the formation of the first organisational unit of JKLF in 1988 in Srinagar. However, this new radical group was built on weak linkages to peripheries.

Most of the JKLF militants belonged to the capital city of Srinagar but had weak ties with the periphery (Verma, 1994, p. 277). This limited access to rural communities made it difficult for the JKLF militants to engage in violent activities beyond Srinagar. JKLF was Srinagar-centric with all the top commanders hailing from Srinagar. That is why 'the group failed to develop and sustain an effective organisational structure outside Srinagar in the smaller urban centers and rural areas' (Bose, 2003, pp. 240–241). This led to the weakening of the group, which was compounded when Pakistan began to divert its material resources to another militant organisation, Hizbul Mujahedeen (HM) which aimed to incorporate Kashmir within Pakistan. The resulting clash between the JKLF members and HM cadre put the final nail in the JKLF's coffin as it quickly began to dwindle in relevance. Many argue that HM was created by Pakistan to dilute or eliminate the independence minded JKLF's support base (Behera, 2000, p. 177).

Hizbul Mujahadeen was effectively the militant arm of the Kashmiri branch of the pre-existing pan-South Asian Islamist movement, Jamaat-e-Islami. Ameer Maulana Sa'auddin, the then leader of Kashmir-based branch of Jamaat-e-Islami, made a pilgrimage from India to Mecca in 1983. He returned from Mecca via Pakistan and is reported to have met General Muhammad Zia ul Haq who persuaded him of initiating violent insurgency against India with Jamaat-e-Islami at its forefront (Joshi, 1999, pp. 16–17). The rigged election of 1987 and the complete involvement of Pakistan's deep state set the stage for the formation of HM in Kashmir. HM appeared as a dominant militant group after the 1990s,¹ owing to the network and consolidated organisational structure of Jamaat-e-Islami (Staniland, 2014, pp. 76–77). However, within a few years, factional differences began to emerge in the HM outfit between those who were close to Jamaat-e-Islami led by the current Amir of HM Syed Salahuddin and those who were committed to dialogue with India led by Abdul Majid Dar (Swami, 2003).

Distinguishing the 'New Militancy' from the Old

As Ali and others have demonstrated, the Kashmiri militancy actually erupted during the 1960s, rather than the late 1980s which is cited in the common historical narrative. JKLF became the chief secessionist arm, focusing primarily on independent Kashmir, while HM and later the LeT represented irredentist wings, stressing Kashmir's need to merge with Pakistan (Mohanty, 2018, pp. 59–71). This wave of militancy died down in 2004, although a new militancy was poised to emerge like a phoenix from the ashes. Devadas's book *The Generation of Rage in Kashmir* sees the phenomenon of changing old into new militancy as a continuum and provides key insights about the rise of 'new militancy' in Kashmir. He argues how generational shift and technological advancement have given rise to new ways of strategising militancy in Kashmir. Devadas writes that the primary causal factor behind the emergence of the new militancy was that Indian government did not recognise or encourage the aspirations of the new generation who wanted to settle down peacefully and seek economic opportunities (Devadas, 2018, p. 10). This generation was willing to search for a dignified life with no sense of fear. However, the continuous humiliation and witch-hunting by the Indian Armed Forces and the local police created in them a deep sense of alienation and rage, pushing them to the brink of 'new militancy' in Kashmir (Devadas, 2018, pp. 10–11).

However, the militancy that started in the 1990s was effectively spent by 2004 (Hussain, 2018), although a new militancy emerged in the early 2010s. Some analysts argue that the first wave of militancy in Kashmir was defeated by 1996 (Joshi, 1999), while others maintain that the initial phase of militancy abated only in the early 2000s. Devadas is squarely in the latter camp, arguing elsewhere that the first phase of militancy declined because militants 'found it extremely difficult to get shelter or assistance in Kashmiri homes' (Devadas, 2013) after a highly violent 1990s. However, when a new breed of young, educated and tech-savvy militants emerged on the scene, with Burhan Wani as their titular leader and figurehead, people in Kashmir began to take a renewed interest in assisting and

sheltering these militants (Shah, 2016). Such has been the transformation that most of the young men march in throngs towards the encounter site only to help militants escape from the clutches of security forces (Bukhari, 2016). This departure from the past signals the change of mood on the ground and the renewed sympathy of people towards the new phase of militancy in Kashmir. Fundamentally, this new wave of Kashmiri militancy is distinguished from its predecessors in three main ways: the origins of the recruits, the ideological motivations of the militants and the higher quality of the recruits in the new militancy.

Recruitment

During the 1990s, militants had to cross LoC into Pakistan for training and recruitment. The training was rigorous with some training programmes lasting for 6 months. But, in the new phase of militancy, the process of recruitment has become easier because the process of recruitment and its announcement is linked to the appeals on social media (Safi, 2017, July 8). The militant outfits release photos—most commonly selfies—of new recruits posing with a weapon to declare the inductions. Accordingly, the new militant recruitment has become highly localised, and two distinctive developments have emerged. First, the recruitment process of local Kashmir has become easier. Second, the local recruits though plentiful are poorly trained in contrast to the older militants (Shah, 2020). The data suggest that the rate of local recruitment has increased significantly in the last decade, suggesting the change of mood on the ground. Shujaat Bukhari, a veteran Kashmiri journalist writes that the locals joining militant ranks were 28 in 2013, 60 in 2014, and 66 in 2015 (Bukhari, 2016). Another Kashmiri journalist, Khalid Shah writes that the locals joining militancy were 16 in 2013, 53 in 2014, 66 in 2015 and 88 in 2016 (Shah, 2020). Although there is some variation in their data, both agree on the point that the local recruitment in the militant ranks has increased considerably since Burhan Wani joined militancy in Kashmir.

During the 1980s and 1990s, militancy was initially dominated by local militants predominately from the urban centres, with the suburb of Maisuma in Srinagar acting as both JKLF's and HM's heartland. However, foreign recruits quickly outnumbered locals and began to rule the roost.² Most of the foreign militants were the citizens of Pakistan, but there was also a good presence of recruits from Chechnya, Central Asian countries and Afghanistan, all of whom also had weak links to Kashmiris beyond the major population centres (Verma, 1994, p. 277). After 2012, the surge in the recruitment of local militants predominantly came from regional Kashmir (Shah, 2020). This arguably happened largely due to the emergence of tech-savvy militant cadres, led most notably by Burhan Wani. Wani changed the course of the militancy in Kashmir by using social media as a tool for attracting youth towards militancy, a trend that has only grown after his elimination by Indian security forces in 2016. The involvement of more local youth in militancy, drawn from a greater breadth of the population, has re-indigenised the armed struggle in Kashmir and brought a greater sense of popular legitimacy to the cause of resistance politics in Kashmir.

Ideology

The old militancy that flared up in the 1990s and petered out by 2004 was heavily dominated by two militant outfits: JKLF and HM. Both the militant groups were logistically and economically supported by Pakistan. JKLF believed in the vision of an independent Kashmir, whereas HM demanded the complete merger of Kashmir within the frontiers of Pakistan (Mohanty, 2018, pp. 59–71). HM was heavily dominated by Jamaat-e-Islamia; it invoked Islam for mobilising the people of Kashmir and opposed the long-held Sufi traditions of Kashmir. However, the new militancy's goals are more complex and ideologically diverse including an increasingly stronger pan-Islamic element (Devadas, 2018, p. 81).³ The increasing pan-Islamic tendencies in the militant ranks stem from two vital factors. First, the Hindutva-ruled BJP party in India is making every attempt possible to corner Muslims, and the policy of iron-fist approach used by the government in Kashmir is seen by the different militant ranks as the process of eliminating Muslim identity from Kashmir. Second, at the global level, Muslims are perceived as being pushed against the wall. The condition of Muslims in Kashmir is viewed by these militant groups as a microcosm of the overall conditions of Muslims all over the world. They relate the condition of Muslims in Kashmir with the pitiful situation of Muslims globally.

Education

Old militancy had educated top commanders, but the lower cadre was not that educated; however, in new militancy, the top leadership as well as the lower rung of militant ranks are well-educated. This argument is debatable among scholars who work on the militancy in Kashmir. Devadas argues that the old militancy that began in 1988 and petered out by 2006 primarily drew its recruits from the undereducated, with many recruits failing school. In contrast, the new militancy largely draws their recruits from the relatively well-educated youth, with many being among the top of their classes (Devadas, 2018, p. 24). However, he has not statistically substantiated this argument. Fair has provided detailed statistics of recruits of Lashkar-e-Taiba and Hizb-ul-Mujahedeen, arguing that the recruits in both these militant outfits are on average much better educated than the populations from which they recruit (Fair, 2013, p. 261). Data collected during 1994 reflect the socio-economic conditions being the major parameters that pushed local youth towards militancy. This study reveals that 68 per cent of trained militants earned between ₹500 and ₹1,000 per month, 11 per cent between ₹1,000 and ₹2,000 Indian Rupees and rest of the 19 per cent were classified as dependents (Karim, 1994, pp. 311–312). The data also show the occupation of the recruited militants, showcasing the poor background of the militants (Karim, 1994, p. 254). This details that the education of militant recruits in the 1990s was comparatively lower, which is complimenting Devadas's arguments and also supporting the claim that socio-economic variables have played a key role in the making of the militancy during the 1990s.

An Anatomy of the Kashmiri Militancy

By the early 1990s, JKLF was losing its pre-eminence over the intricate militant network of Kashmir and HM ascended to the helm. However, the factional split within HM in the mid-1990s, coupled with being behind the killing of the popular Muslim Conference leader Mirwaiz Maulvi Farooq in 1990, damaged its position in Kashmir (Behera, 2000, pp. 180–181). Moreover, HM's ideological rivalry with JKLF and their role in the exodus of Pandits further dented their position in the Valley. Into this milieu stepped the Punjab-based militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). LeT was formed in 1993 when Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi merged his Ahl-e-Hadees militant group with a proselytisation organisation, Jamaat ud Dawah (JuD) that had been established by Hafiz Saeed and Zafar Iqbal. The organisation that emerged from this merger came to be known as the Markaz al-Dawah Irshad (MDI). Within a few years of MDI's founding, Hafiz Saeed set up its armed wing LeT and began working with Pakistani agents to find ways to contribute to the 'jihad' in Kashmir and strike against India generally.

While most of the literature only takes an alluvial analysis on the origins and motivations of the various Kashmiri militant movements, Fair's book *In Their Own Words: Understanding Lashkar-e-Tayyaba* gives a detailed inside-out analysis of LeT group, revealing the deep alliance that exists between Pakistan and its proxies. Fair argues that LeT became the most duteous proxy to Pakistan's security establishment because of two reasons: strategic and economic. Strategically, LeT serves Pakistan's vital strategic interests in India and Afghanistan. Within India, the proxies are employed to pin down hundreds of thousands of security forces in Kashmir, whereas, in Afghanistan, they are engaged to ensure that the country remains within Pakistan's control and does not become a secure base for India (Fair, 2019, p. 10). The use of LeT as proxies is significantly inexpensive when measured in direct economic costs. This helps Pakistan in carrying out difficult objectives with minimal monetary expenses.

Fair presents four distinctive features that make LeT especially favourable to Pakistan's security establishment. First, LeT is the only militant group that has never led any violent attack within Pakistan, marking it a particularly duteous proxy to the deep state with an ability to orchestrate deadly terror attacks outside Pakistan. Second, LeT opposes Takfirism that involves proclaiming other Muslims as non-believers (kafirs). Third, by rejecting Takfirism, LeT also abstains from violent attacks against minorities and other religious groups residing in Pakistan. This is important for reducing both sectarian violence and the ensuing social and political instability in Pakistan. Fourth, LeT has not experienced any major splits at the organisational level, unlike all such other groups (Fair, 2019, pp. 23–26). The firm backing of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has a role to play in this organisational coherence of LeT. After 2000, LeT orchestrated deadly terror attacks within Kashmir in general and India in particular—most notably, the 2001 Indian Parliament attack and the 2008 Mumbai attacks on Indian Security Forces. With Indian counter-insurgency operations at its peak after the 2008 Mumbai attacks, militancy in Kashmir began to drop down and pan-Islamist militant outfits began to mushroom. Zakir Musa

announced the establishment of the new militant group Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind in Kashmir in 2017 with pan-Islamist zeal (Ganai, 2019).

The rise of pan-Islamist militant groups in Kashmir is due to two main factors: first, the ruling Hindutva party, BJP is dubbed as the anti-Muslim party which targets Muslims all over in India through mob attacks, grisly lynching and the growing violence perpetrated by the armed forces through counter-insurgency operations in Kashmir is considered by these militant groups as the process in that direction (Devadas, 2018, pp. 82–85). Second, globally, the rise of Islamophobia and populism has pushed Muslims everywhere up against the wall. These sets of events prompted these groups to avenge the enemies of Islam and propagate jihad in Kashmir with repercussions not only on the peace and stability of the South Asian region but way beyond that.

Conclusion

The three books under review have added substantively to the literature on the Kashmir's militancy, revealing that militancy came into existence because of two main factors. First was India's suppression of the aspirations of the people of Kashmir by muzzling democratic expression and using repressive state apparatus. Second was Pakistan's role in sustaining militant groups, so that Kashmir could become an important battleground for pursuing its vital political and security interests, including Kashmir's incorporation into its state. Ali's book has contributed enormously in unpacking the primary waves of militancy in Kashmir since 1947, with a special focus on Al-Fatah. Although the 1990s saw a major outbreak of militancy throughout Kashmir, it had largely petered out by 2004. Yet, India's continued counter-insurgency operations remained oppressive and often little more than witch-hunts, ultimately achieving little more than humiliating and alienating the Kashmiri youth. Inevitably, as Devadas's work has shown, this led to a new outbreak of militancy which, for all its differences, should be recognised as a continuation of the previous struggle.

Fair's book illustrates how Pakistan uses its proxies for accomplishing political and security interests in Kashmir and gives an in-depth understanding of LeT's organisational and institutional structures, demonstrating the deep nexus that exists between the deep state and LeT. Empirically, these books provide interesting new insights into the rise of new militancy in Kashmir and show their differences from the old militant outfits. Theoretically, they advance the study of how suppression of the democratic rights and aspirations of people can lead to militancy. All the three books under review validate the argument that both India and Pakistan have played a significant role in creating the monster of militancy in Kashmir, which currently not only threatens the peace and stability of South Asia but has repercussions beyond the region.

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Notes

1. The Prison Dairies of Syed Ali Shah Geelani, written in the early 1990s, reflect HM's obsession with controlling the insurgent movement in Kashmir (Sikand, 1998, pp. 241–249).
2. When the first phase of militancy began in Kashmir during the 1990s, locals were dominating the militant ranks. It was only after the fragmentation and tussle for controlling the insurgent movement between JKLF and HM and the birth of the pro-Indian Army group Ikhwan—which the separatists dismissed as 'renegades'—that the militant set-up went into the hands of foreigners, mostly Pakistanis (Bukhari, 2016).
3. Zakir Musa who was the divisional commander of HM expressed anger at those who described Kashmiri struggle as a political one. He rejected nationalism as the basis of struggle, dismissing Kashmir's claim for right to self-determination. He announced in an audio recording that militants are fighting to establish an Islamic state based on Shariah law. This transition set the tune for the emergence of more pan-Islamist militant groups to prop up in Kashmir. For more, see Devadas (2018, p. 81) and Dutta (2017).

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